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## **DCR CHOOSES CURATORS FOR HISTORIC STATE PROPERTIES IN PLYMOUTH, TOPSFIELD, AND EASTON**

*Historic Curatorship Program facilitates new public-private partnerships*

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has chosen curators for three historic buildings in three separate DCR parks. Under DCR's Historic Curatorship Program, curators agree to rehabilitate and reuse historic properties in exchange for a long-term lease on the property.

Donald and Christine McIvor of Buzzards Bay were named curators of the Harlow Farmhouse at Ellisville Harbor State Park in Plymouth. Mark and Ruthann Finn of Wenham were chosen as curators of the Lamson House in Bradley Palmer State Park in Topsfield. And Paul Folkman of Mansfield and Carrie Crisman of Norton were named curators of the Smith Farmhouse at Borderland State Park in Easton.

These are the first new curators selected this year under the Historic Curatorship Program. In fall 2008, DCR solicited proposals for the reuse and lease of these buildings, and the curators were selected through an open and competitive process.

"The Historic Curatorship program fosters a public/private partnership that benefits both the Commonwealth and the curator," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr.

"Preservation of these properties will not only ensure the future maintenance of these important historic resources, it will provide long-term benefits to park visitors and nearby residents alike."

DCR's evaluation team unanimously selected each of the three curators for their comprehensive approach to the preservation of the property, their experience in historic preservation projects, and for the public benefits they will provide.

In Plymouth, the McIvors plan to live in the Harlow House after restoring it, and will offer quarterly public events at the property that will highlight the history of the house and its more than 300 years of occupancy. The McIvors also proposed to recreate a barn adjacent to the house, and restore what was the last piece of an extensive agricultural landscape.

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Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner  
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Donald McIvor is a licensed contractor. He and his wife, Christine, have worked at Plimouth Plantation and are comfortable living and working with historic properties in a public setting. They currently live in Buzzards Bay with their three sons.

“Massachusetts, and particularly the Plymouth area, is rich in historical buildings that tell the story of our state and our nation,” said Senate President Therese Murray. “It is always heartening that people like the McIvors know the value of these buildings and are willing to help preserve our history and allow the public to experience the property. The historic curator program is a wonderful example of how state government and private citizens can work together for the benefit of the Commonwealth and its residents.”

“I am excited to see the restoration of such a historical and important property,” said State Representative Vinny deMacedo. “The Historic Curatorship Program is truly a great project as it places the emphasis on the richness and effectiveness of history, and furthermore conducts such restorations at no cost to the taxpayer. The Harlow Farmhouse is an important piece of Plymouth’s history and I am glad to see this building being brought back to life and to its original grandeur.”

“I am delighted that the Historic Curatorship Program will enable the preservation of this unique Plymouth property,” said State Representative Tom Calter, “and I am grateful to the McIvors for their long-time commitment and dedication to preserving culture and history in the Commonwealth.”

In Topsfield, in addition to restoring their property and living there, the Finns intend to offer public tours of the house, document their rehabilitation on a website, and help improve the parking area at the park’s accessible trailhead.

Mark Finn owns a local construction company, and his wife, Ruthann, is an active member of the Wenham Historical Commission. Together, they have rehabilitated a similar house from the same period in Beverly. The Finns currently live in Wenham with their two sons.

“Many thanks to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for identifying the Lamson House in Topsfield as an ideal location for the Historic Curatorship program,” said State Senator Fred Berry. “Due to the fiscal challenges facing the Commonwealth, now, more than ever, these kinds of partnerships are crucial to the continued success of programs like this. Congratulations to the Finns. I wish them the best of luck in their time in Topsfield.”

In Easton, Paul Folkman and Carrie Crisman plan to restore the Smith Farmhouse and transform that building and adjacent barn into a nonprofit holistic learning center and retreat.

Paul Folkman owns a local construction and real estate company, and Carrie Crisman has experience in alternative healing fields, including meditation, yoga, and massage therapy. Ms. Crisman will live at the property and manage the nonprofit organization, which will provide lectures, small-scale retreats, meetings, and educational seminars. The two plan to hold seasonal, public events and help improve parking areas.

“Smith Farmhouse is a true gem in one of the most historically significant tracts of publicly owned land in the state,” said State Senator Brian Joyce. “The addition of Paul Folkman and Carrie Crisman as curators will only add to the significance of this highly used and well-preserved treasure for the Town of Easton and its surrounding communities to enjoy.”

Established in 1994, the Historic Curatorship Program matches some of the Commonwealth's significant historic buildings with people interested in rehabilitating and maintaining the building in exchange for a long-term lease. Since the program's inception, more than \$5 million in private funds has been leveraged toward these restorations.

So far, nine properties have been rehabilitated under the program, from the mountains of Berkshire County to the urban streets of Dorchester. Current uses for the properties include single-family homes, artist lofts, a nonprofit youth center, and a for-profit events facility.

The Lamson House in Topsfield is a two-story, wood-frame Georgian farmhouse. The house is historically significant both as the home of the Colonial and Federal-era Lamson family, and for its associations with Bradley Palmer and his early 20th-century manor estate. It is a unique amalgam of Colonial and Colonial Revival styles.

The Harlow House in Plymouth was built by Ernest C. Ellis on the site of a much older house that served as a stagecoach stop and tavern during the 18th and 19th centuries. It is a one-story, Neo-Colonial cape built in 1939, and features a center chimney, 12-over-12 windows, and gabled roof dormers. An open porch offers views of the tidal marshes of Ellisville Harbor.

The Smith House in Easton is a modest Cape Cod-style farmhouse set in a grassy meadow along the shores of Borderland's Leach Pond. Doctor Asabiel Smith, a clairvoyant healer, built the two-story house around 1880, and it was later incorporated into the Borderland Estate of the influential Ames family.

DCR's Historic Curatorship Program is one of only a handful in the country and is among the most successful. The program requires that reuses of the properties be compatible with the surrounding community and enhance the visitor's experience of the park.

For more information on the Historic Curatorship Program, visit [mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/curator/index.htm](http://mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/curator/index.htm), send an email to [HCP.Requests@state.ma.us](mailto:HCP.Requests@state.ma.us), call 617-626-1361, or write to Historic Curatorship Program, Department of Conservation and Recreation, 7th floor, 251 Causeway St., Boston, MA 02114.

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*The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit [www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr). Contact us at [mass.parks@state.ma.us](mailto:mass.parks@state.ma.us).*